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Canada. Trade and Commerce, Dept. of.  
Trade Commissioner Service


A career in Canada's Foreign  
Trade Service.





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Canada, Trade and Commerce,  
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BOGOTA

*a Career  
in Canada's  
Foreign  
Trade  
Service*

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YANA

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SAO PAULO

SINGAPORE



Trade Commissioner Service

Department of Trade and Commerce

Ottawa

TOKYO

WASHINGTON

WELLINGTON

620649

14.10.55





**a Career  
in Canada's  
Foreign  
Trade  
Service**

*You are thinking of your future in terms of service, of accomplishment?*

*You are not entirely sure what occupation will satisfy all your aspirations, will identify you with the world-wide concerns of a vigorous and growing country?*

*If your mind is turning over these larger concepts which will so greatly affect your future happiness, there are few better alternatives than to consider government service as a career.*

*The Foreign Trade Service of the Department of Trade and Commerce provides one such opportunity, and the purpose of this booklet is to tell you something about it.*





*The Commercial Counsellor in London conducts Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth around the Trade and Commerce display at the British Industries Fair.*



# **The Foreign Trade Service**

## **—What It Involves**

The Department of Trade and Commerce was established just over 60 years ago, and took over a group of eight Commercial Agents who had been assigned to the West Indies, the United Kingdom and France, as far back as 1885. At that time, Canadian exports were under \$100 million per year, as compared with over \$4,000 million in recent years.

The Foreign Trade Service, as at present constituted, has grown with Canada and now consists of 53 offices abroad, staffed by over 100 officers. It is still growing, and plans are constantly being made for the opening of new offices as trade possibilities may require.

Personnel who enter the Department of Trade and Commerce for service abroad are called Foreign Service Officers, and are rated in the same fashion as their counterparts in the Department of External Affairs. They generally spend about a year in Ottawa, and are then assigned to a foreign post as Assistant Trade Commissioners, taking over a post of their own in due course.

In the foreign field, there are some offices in countries where Canada has no diplomatic mission. In such cases, foreign trade officers are called Trade Commissioners, or occasionally serve as Consuls or Consuls-General.

In those posts where diplomatic missions are now established, the foreign trade officers start as Assistant Commercial Secretaries, then become Commercial Secretaries and finally Commercial Counsellors and Ministers.

In addition, an officer is required to serve at headquarters in Ottawa. He may have occasion in the course of his career to return to Ottawa for a term in the Trade Commissioner Service, Commodities Branch, Agriculture and Fisheries Branch, or some of the other correlated services at head office.

Without these branches, the foreign trade officer could not function effectively, and there are consequently a number of specialists on permanent duty in Ottawa whose main preoccupations are to maintain liaison with industrialists, importers and exporters, to establish satisfactory records and directories, edit *Foreign Trade* and other information material, and generally to keep in close touch both with field services and the domestic scene.

Of great importance also is the International Trade Relations Branch, which helps to plan trade policy, including trade agreements and other instruments facilitating the smooth functioning of our trade



relations. The Canadian Government Exhibition Commission prepares and sets up the exhibitions in foreign countries which are considered useful to Canada's prestige and trade interests. The Industrial Development Branch seeks, with the help of Foreign Service Officers, to assist foreign firms in the establishment of branch plants in Canada.

Thus, the activities of the Department, in all of which Foreign Service Officers participate, are diverse enough to maintain an ever-constant interest. These activities are outlined in the following paragraphs.



*A gift of Canadian dried codfish presented by the Commercial Counselor in Tokyo to Korean orphans at Seoul.*





*The Assistant Commercial Secretary in Berne represents Canada at a meeting of the Economic Commission for Europe.*

## **Functions of the Foreign Service Officer**

The primary function of the Foreign Trade Service is the promotion of Canada's export trade. To achieve this, Canadian goods have to be made known in foreign countries. Part of the job is therefore good public relations. Canada is a relative newcomer in certain branches of trade, and the country which may be fully aware of Canadian wheat and furs may totally ignore the fact that Canada produces cobalt bombs for cancer, or its own jet engines.

Canada's evolution as an industrial power has to be constantly explained and emphasized. This involves public speaking as well as government contacts, private discussions, and the dissemination of information through any available medium.

It requires more than that, however, for it is the follow-up which will ultimately provide results. It may be appropriate to say that

Canada is now an industrial power, but it is the foreign importer who, as a result of this statement, says: "My main interest is fish nets. Has Canada evolved any new ideas that would be of interest here?" He is the man who has to be given precise details in order to obtain concrete results.

In order to obtain such details, the Foreign Service Officer is given a wider latitude than is general in government service. Far less than one-quarter of his correspondence is with Ottawa headquarters. The remainder is with contacts in the field, and with actual producers or exporters in Canada. He is encouraged to range far and wide in his search for special knowledge—for few officers are specialists as such, but have to deal with a multitude of special situations. He discusses problems with the Canadian exporter, gains a knowledge of his business, and in turn transmits to him the highly technical information he himself acquires about the market for which he is responsible.

He becomes encyclopaedic about a great variety of subjects: tariffs and import restrictions; freight rates and shipping routes; business practices, ranging from agency and barter arrangements through the alphabet to zoning of sales territories; he must attain some understanding of international trade policies, banking practices, arbitration procedures, and a great variety of other subjects. He will also have the opportunity to attend international conferences as a member or an adviser of Canadian delegations.

In official language, the duties of the Trade Commissioner are to introduce Canadian exporters and importers to the corresponding business men of other countries; to study conditions and needs of the territories where they are located; to obtain and forward inquiries for Canadian goods to headquarters at Ottawa and to Canadian exporters; to report on import requirements in their territories and to make direct inquiries or conduct preliminary surveys regarding the potential market for any product, reporting the exact kinds of goods wanted, competition to be met, methods of packing, shipping or billing, tariffs and trade regulations affecting these goods, and so on.

Trade developments the world over are reported by Trade Commissioners to the Department at Ottawa, and this information is available to all Canadian exporters and importers. They also prepare periodic reports on trade, business and financial conditions, markets for particular commodities, materials available for supply for import into Canada, and other related subjects for publication in *Foreign Trade* or in pamphlet form.



## Representational Activities

For anyone with an inquiring mind, association with men and women of varied and living interests, the study of social contrasts, or ethical differences, between one country and another, will be a source of enduring interest. When this is combined with the absorption of the work itself, and the sense of contribution to the common good of Canada, then it constitutes a real source of satisfaction.

Social obligations vary from post to post, but the officer is expected, with the help of his official position, to make high level contacts with the administration of the country to which he is posted, with bankers, the business community, and other circles which will be of use in his work. Special allowances are provided in order to ensure that these representational duties may be performed without strain on comfortable living standards. Since his accommodation is expected to be suitable for reasonable entertainment requirements, special rental allowances are provided for.

The work itself is not entirely localized in the centre to which one is posted. It is necessary to keep in touch with the community as a whole, to travel widely through the territory to be covered, to maintain contacts in those other areas. Opportunities for wide dissemination of information about Canada thus exist, and, from the point of view of the officer, knowledge of habits and customs of the people in his various posts provide an ever-changing background.

If these widely diversified interests coincide with your own objectives, then you should look to Canada's Foreign Trade Service. The qualifications and the standards of the Service mean that you will be working with men of like mind.



*Trade Commissioners, in countries without Canadian diplomatic missions, issue visas.*

## Training For the Job

All this accumulation of knowledge, insight and intuition takes time, but the Department contributes a well-balanced program of training. During his first year, the new officer will be in Ottawa, working perhaps on the Latin America or other Area Desks, and then in the Information Branch, and in one or two commodity divisions. He will work also in Transportation and Trade Services, in International Trade Relations; he will frequently be given special assignments which add to his knowledge of departmental and government policy. The object of his training is to enable him to acquire a working knowledge of all the branches of the Department of Trade and Commerce and some familiarity with the activities of other departments and government agencies associated in any way with foreign trade work.

Then, at the end of his training, he will be sent out with his colleagues for a two or three months' tour of Canada, to visit factories; talk with executives who will need his assistance in his later career; learn the problems and the troubles and the hopes of the Canadian exporter. He will see the country from coast to coast; will visit new projects, and learn to appreciate the vastness and the enterprise that is Canada.

Only then is he ripe for a posting abroad; he will work under the direction of a senior officer until he too gets his own post.

In the meantime, there is a return to Canada every three and one-half years (more frequently from tropical areas); home leave up to three months; and refresher tours of Canada.



*The Commercial Secretary at Karachi officiates at the laying of the cornerstone of a cement plant being built as a Canadian contribution to the Colombo Plan.*





*At the Canadian exhibit in the Milan International Trade Fair, the Assistant Commercial Secretary explains a point to the President of Italy.*

## **Posts and Postings**

There are over 50 posts in the Service. Transfers are frequent enough to maintain interest, and to ensure a balance between pleasant and less agreeable posts. In the course of his career, for instance, an officer may serve in Leopoldville or Karachi, Tokyo or Djakarta, Rio de Janeiro or Bogota, Paris, London, Rome, Madrid. It is not the policy of the Department (unless an officer has particular aptitudes or interests) to form Latin America specialists or Far East experts, but rather to provide for a wide variety of experience, which tends to be more effective than intimate knowledge of any particular region.

And, surprisingly, this facilitates the study of languages, for if one or two have been mastered, others come much more easily, and self-consciousness is left behind.

## Location of Trade Commissioner Offices

Offices of the Trade Commissioner Service are located in the following cities:

Athens	Dublin	New Delhi
Beirut	Guatemala	New Orleans
Belfast	Havana	New York
Berne	Hong Kong	Oslo
Bogota	Johannesburg	Paris
Bombay	Karachi	Port of Spain
Bonn	Kingston	Rio de Janeiro
Boston	Kobe	Rome
Brussels	Leopoldville	Salisbury
Buenos Aires	Lima	Santiago
Cairo	Lisbon	Sao Paulo
Cape Town	Liverpool	Singapore
Caracas	London	Stockholm
Chicago	Madrid	Sydney
Copenhagen	Manila	The Hague
Ciudad Trujillo	Melbourne	Tokyo
Detroit	Mexico	Washington
Djakarta	Montevideo	Wellington

In addition to headquarters in Ottawa, there are offices in Canada at St. John's and Vancouver.

## Qualifications

**Academic** — Candidates must be graduates of a university of recognized standing. Specialization in economics, commerce or international trade will be helpful. Also required are candidates with a background of engineering, agriculture, law or public administration.

Additional credits are given for:

- (a) Post-graduate studies in one of these or other related fields;
- (b) Business or professional experience;
- (c) Command of a modern language other than English or French.

Persons completing their final year of university in the Spring following the date of the examination may become candidates, but vacancies will not be open to them until after their graduation.



**Personal** — Candidates must be able to write and speak clearly and effectively, to analyse material of all sorts and to prepare from it precis and memoranda. They must be personally suitable and be able to exercise independent judgment and tact, to assume increasing responsibility and to work effectively with others. They must also be in satisfactory physical condition.

**Residence** — In addition to being British subjects, candidates must have resided in Canada for at least ten years and if not now resident in Canada must have retained their contact with Canada. Service in the Canadian armed forces outside of Canada will be considered as residence in Canada.

**Age** — The Civil Service Commission, at the request of the Department, will accept as candidates for Foreign Service Officer, Grade 1, only persons who are below the age of 31 years.

## Salary

Entrance to the Trade Commissioner Service is by appointment as Foreign Service Officer, Grade 1. This is, however, but the first step in a career in the Foreign Trade Service which provides for progressive promotion on the basis of merit and seniority to the present maximum of \$10,000. The salary on appointment is \$3,480 per annum. After a satisfactory probationary period of up to one year, the salary will be increased to \$3,780.

In addition to salary, non-taxable allowances are paid to all officers serving abroad. These are intended to cover cost-of-living differentials, representation, house rent, education, proficiency in a foreign language, and others. The allowances vary with the post and the status of the officer.

Transportation of the officer, his immediate family, personal and household effects to and from his post is provided at the expense of the Department.

Foreign Service Officers are entitled to the generous benefits of the Canadian Government Superannuation Plan. After 35 years' service, an officer receives a pension equivalent to 70 per cent of his average salary during the last ten years. Details are available on request.

## Preparation for the Examination

The candidate should have a broad general knowledge of current Canadian and international problems and be able to discuss them intelligently; an appreciation of the economic and commercial factors underlying these problems is also necessary.

A practical knowledge of various aspects of commercial policies and practices and, more specifically, an understanding of the extent and direction of Canadian export trade, its methods and documentation, will be helpful.

In addition to testing the candidate's knowledge and understanding of specific subjects and his ability to comprehend written material quickly and accurately, the examination is designed to bring out his ability to analyse a theoretical problem clearly and in logical fashion.

## How to Make Application

Applicants for the position of Foreign Service Officer, Grade 1, in the Trade Commissioner Service of the Department of Trade and Commerce, should write to the Civil Service Commission, Jackson Building, Ottawa, and request that their names be placed on the mailing list to receive official notification of the next examination. Further information about the Service may also be obtained by personal interview or on written request to the Director, Trade Commissioner Service, Department of Trade and Commerce, Ottawa.

Trade Commissioners on tour in Canada are usually available at the local offices of the Chambers of Commerce or the Canadian Manufacturers' Association for brief interviews with prospective applicants who may be considering the Trade Commissioner Service as a career. The itineraries of these tours are published in *Foreign Trade*, the fortnightly magazine of the Department of Trade and Commerce.

During the past, examinations have been held annually; and it is anticipated that, subject to the requirements of the Service, this policy will be continued.













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